

God gives us all the invitation to seek Him.
Do you have the courage and charity to do so?

Obsculta

January 2014

The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross inspiration comes from: Scripture, Church Teachings, The Holy Rule, and Cistercian Monastic Tradition as lead by the Holy Spirit.



Saint Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary continues the scholarly, classically catholic, and deeply spiritual formation, which was inspired by Saint Stephen.

The quarterly newsletter of
The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, Common Observance
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How to know God's will for your life - What guidance does the Bible give me?

The Holy Scriptures, the teachings of the Church Fathers, and the Holy Spirit working through the Magisterium of the Church gives us sufficient guidance on the General will of God for us all.



Romans 12:1-2 tells us the steps of how to know God's will for your life: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

"Over all these virtues put on love, which binds the rest together and makes them perfect. Christ's peace must reign in your hearts, since as members of the one body you have been called to that peace. Dedicate yourselves to thankfulness." Col.3:14-15

"And the Lord, seeking His laborer in the multitude to whom He thus cries out, says again, 'Who is the man who will have life, and desires to see good days?' And if, hearing Him you answer, 'I am he,' God says to you, 'If you will have true and everlasting life keep your tongue from evil and your lips that they speak no guile. Turn away from evil and do good, seek after peace and pursue it. And when you have done these things My eyes shall be upon you, and My ears open to your prayers; and before you call upon Me I will say to you, 'Behold here I am'.'" Prologue Rule of St. Benedict.

"Always humble yourself lovingly before God and man, because God speaks to those who are truly humble of heart, and enriches them with His gifts." St. Padre Pio.

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"I know that it is his (God's) will by those who direct me; whatever they bid me to do, if it is ever so small in itself, is the will of God for me." St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

How to know God's will for your life - What guidance does the Bible give me? (Continued)

Our problem is not only knowing God's will, but rather not wanting to do it!

God communicates His General will for us throughout Scripture and particularly in the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament and the two laws of the New Testament, "Love God with your whole heart, soul and mind and love your neighbor as yourself. Additionally:

A. God communicated His general will in the Holy Scriptures and the teaching authority of the Church for our lives and situations.

B. The revealed things are for us to do, and the others are for God to do (Deut 29:29).

C. If you are a woman, is the will of God difficult to know (Ep 5:22,33; I Pet 3:1-6).

D. If you are a man, is the will of God difficult to know (Col 3:19; Eph 6:4; Prov 5:19).

E. If you are a child, is the will of God difficult to know (Eph 6:1-3; I Timothy 5:4).

F. The will of God is to serve your employer well (Ephesians 6:6).

G. Abstaining from fornication is the will of God (I Thess 4:3).

H. Giving thanks in everything is the will of God (I Thess 5:18).

I. Submitting to civil government is the will of God (I Peter 2:15).

J. Those who do God's will are the brothers and sisters of Christ (Mark 3:35), for they are the ones who keep His commandments (Luke 8:19-21; 11:27-28). **If you are in sin it is difficult to know the will of God.**

K. We transform ourselves to God's Word and prove His holy will (Romans 12:2).

To reiterate, the steps to know God's will for your life from the Romans 12:1-2 are: surrendering our lives, not conforming to what the world offers; and renewal of our minds so we will be transformed.

To renew our minds, we study God's Word to know Him better, to learn His laws and precepts. We are then transformed into being more Christ-like.

"Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground." Ps.143:10



News From the Abbot General

The Most Reverend Oscar Joseph, Ph.D., D.S.T., OCCO

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Would you like to help us found a residential monastery in Winston-Salem, NC?

Greetings Dear Brothers, Oblates, and Friends:

“I know that it is his (God’s) will by those who direct me; whatever they bid me to do, if it is ever so small in itself, is the will of God for me.” St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Much of this Obsculta is dedicated to knowing and following both God’s General Will and His Specific Will. As monastics/clerics we take vows of obedience to our Abbot and Bishops. Even a simple interpretation of the vows would require us to do what the Abbot or Bishop tells us. Often the Abbot or Bishop’s General Will is included in the Governing Documents and their Specific Will is expressed via oral or written communication directly from these Superiors. This sounds simple enough. Why is it that so many monks and clerics do not keep their vows?

I do believe, and so does St. Benedict, that the Superiors will be held accountable for those who are not obedient unless the Superiors have tried all remedies and the monk and/or cleric is not willing to submit. Since this is not the moment to further advance discussion about superiors I will but mention three errors that all Superiors seem to make: 1. They allow men to take vows who are not able psychologically, emotionally, or physically able to keep them. 2. The Superiors do not enforce their own Governing Documents. 3. The Superiors do not appreciate the sacredness of their office.

Why is it that so many monks/clerics do not keep their vows? Simply put they do not want to.

While that sounds a bit harsh my point is very clear, our hearts are hardened, deceived, self absorbed, and hedonistic. All too frequently we are driven by our emotional “needs” rather than understanding that obedience at first is an act of the will formed by discipline. Only after years of serious formation are we reformed, trained into wanting to be obedient. Scripture is very clear, if we cannot be obedient to our earthly Superiors we cannot be obedient to Christ.

Let us remember that our earthly Superiors are Christ present to us.

Knowing the Specific Will of God

by Abbot Oscar Joseph ,OCCO



**Many want to know God's will for their lives and for life's specific situations.
Our problem is not only knowing God's will, but rather not wanting to do It.**

I believe that most of our Obsculta readers already know that following God's will actually make us more happy than following our own yet if we are honest not all of us actually sincerely seek out God's will in the manner that He has told us to do

We often use some false piety of feeling good, being at peace, and generally imposing our will upon Him or giving His name to our endeavors to somehow validate our self-absorption and myopic views on life.

It troubles me that people who are living in serious unrepentant sin honestly believe that they can reject God with one hand and seek His perfect will with the other.

It troubles me that new or untried members of the faith believe that they have some special access to Godly truth that those who have been faithful and educated have struggled to achieve over a lifetime.

It troubles me that people confuse the natural consequences of reaping and sowing with a confirmation of God's perfect will. Or in some cases believe that it represents God's punishment.

It troubles me that so many churches, spiritual leaders, lay people, ok let us just say it EVERYONE confuses pop psychology with Scriptural truth. The biggest offender is "God loves us unconditionally." UGH!!!

It troubles me that Bishops/Abbots/other spiritual leaders forget that they are Christ present to their flock and need to first look after their own sanctification so they can clearly and often hear from God and have the boldness to speak His perfect will regardless of the consequences.

It troubles me that mostly EVERYONE fails to educate/inform their conscience and have no or few standards to apply against a situation. So they are left with the bankruptcy of "it seemed like the right thing at the time."

It troubles me that we do things that are clearly our will then ask God to bless it or treat God as some genie in a bottle kept in a drawer to be taken out when we are in desperate need because we screwed up.

It troubles me when people abandon their orthodox beliefs and faithful long time friends for the sake of their own pleasure.

It troubles me that we are so absolutely self absorbed that we do not even consider being thankful and appreciative of those who have sacrificed for us.

It does NOT trouble me that I am so troubled. The prophetic gifts are working and I am proclaiming not myself but the wounds on the precious Body of our Lord.

Please let us all do what is necessary to seek not only Gods General Will but His Perfect Will for our lives and those whom we lead.

What is God's Perfect Will?



Do not be conformed to this present world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may test and approve what is the will of God-what is good and well-pleasing and perfect (Romans 12:2), Notice that here turning one's back on the world, and having one's mind renewed (by God) enables one to discern and experience God's will for *you*, a will (or we might say purpose or plan) which is good, which is a delight to us and to God, and which has no flaws, no missing pieces -- complete. Because God is omniscient, He knows what He will accomplish in us. He knows what we will do, and what we would do, in any given circumstance.

Thus, His plans for us will never fail; they will never be flawed by some missing piece of information, some unknown detail. God's plan and purpose for each and every believer is for our good, and for His glory (see Romans 8:28).+ + **The Most Rev. David S. Moody, D.D., Th.D.**

Conscience must be informed and moral judgment enlightened. A well-formed conscience is upright and truthful. It formulates its judgments according to reason, in conformity with the true good willed by the wisdom of the Creator. The education of conscience is indispensable for human beings who are subjected to negative influences and tempted by sin to prefer their own judgment and to reject authoritative teachings.

The education of the conscience is a lifelong task. From the earliest years, it awakens the child to the knowledge and practice of the interior law recognized by conscience. Prudent education teaches virtue; it prevents or cures fear, selfishness and pride, resentment arising from guilt, and feelings of complacency, born of human weakness and faults. The education of the conscience guarantees freedom and engenders peace of heart.

Yet it can happen that moral conscience remains in ignorance and makes erroneous judgments about acts to be performed or already committed.

This ignorance can often be imputed to personal responsibility. This is the case when a man "takes little trouble to find out what is true and good, or when conscience is by degrees almost blinded through the habit of committing sin."⁵⁹ In such cases, the person is culpable for the evil he commits.

Ignorance of Christ and his Gospel, bad example given by others, enslavement to one's passions, assertion of a mistaken notion of autonomy of conscience, rejection of the Church's authority and her teaching, lack of conversion and of charity: these can be at the source of errors of judgment in moral conduct.

If - on the contrary - the ignorance is invincible, or the moral subject is not responsible for his erroneous judgment, the evil committed by the person cannot be imputed to him. It remains no less an evil, a privation, a disorder. One must therefore work to correct the errors of moral conscience.

A good and pure conscience is enlightened by true faith, for charity proceeds at the same time "from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith."⁶⁰ The more a correct conscience prevails, the more do persons and groups turn aside from blind choice and try to be guided by objective standards of moral conduct.⁶¹ from The Catholic Catechism

CONFUSION

A. Many want to know God's will for their lives and for life's specific situations.

B. Our goal should be to grow in favor with God and man (Luke 2:52), yet it appears difficult to many to know when they are in the favor of God.

C. Many think that true success can only be had by finding God's exact and specific will for your life i.e. major in college, which college, spouse, church, job, house, car, etc.; and this phobia creates painful perplexity that should not exist.

D. When something positive happens, pagans say, "He must be living right." And therefore lay claim to circumstances as the evidence of God or Fate's approval.

E. Others will say, "I just have a peace in my heart about it," submitting to feelings.

F. Our problem is not only knowing God's will, but rather not wanting to do it!

CIRCUMSTANCES

A. You cannot tell God's will by circumstances (Ecclesiastes 9:1-3; 7:15; Ps 73:3,12).

B. If you need or use "a fleece" like Gideon, you are playing with matches and gasoline.

1. The "fleece" you may set your eyes upon may not be from the Lord at all.

2. Gideon was not a giant man of faith for using "fleeces" to know God's will.

3. If you allow the "fleece" mentality, you are open to deceiving circumstances.

C. Consider positive circumstances that do not prove God's favor upon a person.

1. Nabal was a rich man, but he was an evil fool whom God killed (I Sam 25:2-3).

2. Nebuchadnezzar was greatly blessed, but judged (Dan 4:27).

D. Consider negative circumstances that do not prove God's rejection of a person.

1. Joseph was righteous and beloved, but consider his difficult life (Gen 37:28).

2. God approved of Job very highly, but tried him with evil events (Job 1:12; 2:6).

3. Lazarus was laid for dogs to find him, but he went to heaven (Luke 16:20-21).

4. Aren't you glad that Paul did not measure God's will by his circumstances?

E. Favorable circumstances ought to lead us to repentance (Rom 2:4), not complacency.

F. Sometimes God is silent circumstantially, and men are deceived by it (Ps 50:21-23).

G. Unfavorable circumstances ought to lead us to examination (Ecclesiastes 7:14).

H. We should respond and address all circumstances with thanksgiving (I Thess 5:18).



CALL

- A. God has called us to do His will with the same noble mind our Lord had (I Peter 4:1-3).**
- B. Even suffering is good, if it is done for the will of God (I Peter 2:19; 3:16-17; 4:19).**
- C. The world will pass away, but those who do the will of God abide forever (I John 2:17).**

COMFORT

Feelings of comfort with a choice are NOT signs that you know the will of God.

Often people will say, "I know the will of God by my feelings, for "I just know I had a peace about it." Often we have a feeling of peace because of the emotional release of having simply made a decision even if it was a bad one.

Looking for "peace" in a decision is submitting to your deceitful heart (Jer 17:9).

Remember that Paul truly felt that he ought to do many things against Jesus (Acts 26:9).



COUNSELORS

A. Bishops/Abbots/priests, parents, husbands, wives, and friends, and others are given by God to help. **For clerics and/men in Holy Orders their will must first be united to the will of their Superiors and the governing documents of their ministries or they will NOT be able to know the will of God and could be in serious sin.**

1. Yet their counsel must be always measured and tried by the Word of God.
2. They may be useful for helping you find God's will in the Word of God.
3. They must be holy people and their influence must come from Scripture and the Holy Spirit. **Someone of the world cannot give spiritual wisdom.**

CONSCIENCE

- A. The conscience is the candle of the Lord - we use it to avoid offending God (Pr 20:27).
 - B. Paul exercised conscience to void of offence toward God (Acts 24:16).
 - C. And he exhorted Timothy to use his conscience ministerially (I Tim 1:5,19, 3:9).
 - D. But your conscience must be taught by the Spirit and Word to be of much value.**
- People who continue to live in serious sin do NOT have a conscience.**

CONFIRMATION

- A. If we keep His will – His commandments – we will learn more and more (John 7:17).
- B. The path of the just is like a flashlight – it shines more and more to perfection (Pr 4:18).
- C. The blessing of God follows the obedience, it does not precede it (Jas 1:25; Ps 19:11).**
- D. When you pray for certain matters, the Spirit can pray the will of God (Rom 8:27).

CONFIDENCE

- A. God has given us hearts and intelligence to choose - we trust Him for details (Pr 16:9).
 - 1. Ruth's heart chose to glean, but the Lord sent her to the field of Boaz (Ruth 2:3).
 - 2. Jonathan attacked the Philistines (I Sam 14:6-15).
- B. If we have two equal choices, then we trust the Lord to open and close doors for us.
 - 1. Paul tried north and south, before the Lord led him to go west (Acts 16:6-12).
 - 2. Do you have a desire or plan? Try it by Scripture, submit it to God, and go after proper discernment.
- C. The godly approach to life is to make your plans by the word of God and wisdom, and then trust Him completely for the outcome with thanksgiving regardless (James 4:15).
 - 1. Men of faith will attempt great things for God and expect great things from Him.
 - 2. When surrounded, Joab divided his men and trusted the Lord (II Samuel 10:12).
- D. We live carefree by following His Word and turning the rest over to Him (Phil 4:6-7).
 - 1. We should pray to stand complete and perfect in all God's will (Col 1:9; 4:12).
 - 2. We pray for God's will before we act on our will this allows our plans to be realized (Rom 1:10; 15:30-32).**





Kathleen Powell Rivest, Ph.D., D.D.

Marian Scholar



Jesus came to fulfill the will of the Father. He came to give everything for us. It seems obvious that Jesus would be born into a family whose life training and faith were to follow Scripture, whose life goal was to do what the Lord commanded. And so he was.

Jesus had, by human standards, a tough mission to fulfill: to give his life through a torturous death for many who could not understand or acknowledge his identity. He needed people to walk with him through his valley. Many were involved along the way that did the will of God, completing their parts in His plan: John the Baptist; the disciples; the people who came into contact with Jesus and were healed. They, too, were part of the way in which God's plan was revealed and accomplished.

The Jewish people were God's chosen because they chose to be chosen. They chose to study and submit themselves to the traditions of generations of Jewish people. Certainly not all Jews did this perfectly, but there was enough consistency to allow God to guide, help and protect them. Joseph and Mary came from families who chose to be chosen. By their faith, purity of heart, and daily actions Mary and Joseph became persons whom God trusted with his Son.

Mary was young at the time of the Annunciation, perhaps 13 or 14. Her human brain was still developing. Though still maturing physically, her spiritual maturity was already beyond most adults. Joseph was older and more experienced. This is shown in the description of how he wrestled with what was the right thing to do, according to his understanding of Jewish tradition, when he learned of Mary's pregnancy. Fortunately, in addition to having "book learning", Joseph, I believe, had experience in listening for God's specific direction. Thus he was able to hear God in his dream and act obediently.

So, what can we learn from considering these events? Doing God's will is not done in a vacuum. We have Scripture and tradition to guide us so that we can be wise in our discernment. We have each other to talk to when we sense God is speaking to us. We are also blessed to have a Father who is willing and able to communicate with us as we learn to listen with holy ears for the purpose of completing the task He gives each of us.



On doing God's perfect will in living simply and helping others.

Br. Paul Robb OCCO

When I first inquired about the Cistercian Order, I did so on a retreat at the Abbey of Gethsemani where I arrived after a nearly eleven hour drive that began from my apartment in Fayetteville, NC at about 4:30 am nearly ten years ago. I became somewhat familiar with Gethsemani when I learned about it in the autobiographical book by Thomas Merton titled The Seven Story Mountain. In the book, Merton describes how he eventually arrived there and became a monk after pursuing many different spiritual and not so spiritual paths in his search for a life of Christian perfection. After reading several parts of the book, I was intrigued enough to want to visit the place of which he spoke and to experience it firsthand. I inquired and registered to attend a retreat for Lay Cistercians that was to be held in September, 2004.

The initial conference was given by a monk, Fr. Anton, who had been at the monastery for a number of years as a brother but was recently ordained a priest within the past year. His chosen topic was about what it was like to be a Cistercian monk from his perspective. I expected him to speak on the many customs and practices and their meaning to him such as early rising to pray Vigils, frequent pauses to pray during the day, manual labor, spiritual direction, praying the Scriptures, and so forth. While Fr. Anton touched on these points, he did so in a manner that left an impression on me that has remained with me even until today. He spoke of himself and his community as ordinary men who have come together from all backgrounds and experience to live according to the teachings of the Gospel

He emphasized that what makes these men unique is that they share the common value of striving to live the gospel message without compromise. All strive to follow the command to listen to God speaking to them and following through on the commands and teachings of Jesus to love one another. They do so on some days with much success but sometimes they do not get it all right and need to continue to work to "get it right".

I learned a lot from that retreat and from the years that followed. I have learned about prayer, about working on my relationships with God, my family, others, all of creation, about giving thanks and praise to God, about realizing that everything I am and have comes from God. I have learned to listen to God's word as it is presented in the scriptures, the teachings of the Church, and the demands of everyday life. Moreover, I am challenged not only to listen but to act on what I am hearing which is to love God and all people in the world with the same love that Jesus has for all of us. The message is clear. **What is challenging, however, is whether we wish to put into practice what we know and hear.** If we choose to be with Jesus and follow Him, we also choose to live our life His way, that is to put the needs of others before our own, to be kind and considerate to all that we meet, to be patient with them, and to forgive them when necessary. In the words of the psalmist, the key to living a long life filled with happiness is to refrain from speaking evil and from lying. We are told to turn away from evil and do good. We should strive for peace with all our heart. The question for all of us to answer is not what should we do but whether we will accept the invitation to show and to do what we know is what God wills for us.

Brothers (and Sisters) Beyond Biology

The necessity to be close to the Abbot and the Cistercian family to develop and maintain a walk in the perfect will of God

by Br. Columcille, OCCO+

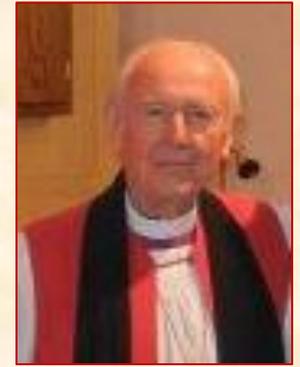
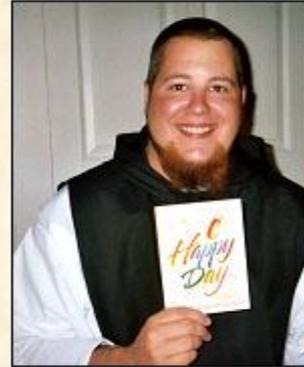
As a contemplative Benedictine reform Order, Cistercian culture has had to develop a framework that can support a wide variety of monastic spiritual experience. Throughout Cistercian history, male and female, cenobite and hermit, extern and oblate have reaped the rewards of the solid foundation laid by St. Benedict, and expanded by generations of faithful Cistercian leadership. Critical to the personal success and fulfillment of each member is a close relationship with the monastic community and its Abbot.

In his *Rule for Monasteries*, Holy Father Benedict went into great detail regarding the structure and maintenance of each group of monks, and the role of the Abbot. He did so because he knew that living a monastic life (of any kind) is a terrific challenge that one man/woman should not have to face alone.

The creation of a non-biological family model allows each member to avoid operating in a vacuum. This model has persisted due to its efficacy in supporting monks living both within and without the monastery by offering constant prayer, friendship, and a sounding board for ideas and/or difficulties.

St. Aelred wrote in detail about spiritual friendship and its benefits. Like St. Benedict, he saw that man is a communal animal that operates best when supported, led, and instructed by his peers, and that to deny this truth would be spiritually and emotionally devastating to the individual.

These principles are perhaps even *more* important to the men and women of the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, as most of us live “in the world” rather than in physical community. Although our ministries and spiritual practices may vary widely, we share the common bond of our Cistercian charism and the connection of spiritual friendship. One should see this as a well to which we can return repeatedly for rest, healing, instruction, and support.



ON BEING AN “OLD SOLDIER” LIVING IN THE WILL OF GOD

by Bishop George Stenhouse

At its heart military service always involves keeping the discipline and honor of the branch and unit within which the individual serves, always obeying those who have command authority over him or her with immediacy, respect, and effectiveness. The needs of self are largely subsumed in the life of the corps. For the most part the spiritual life is a private and personal matter. Upon discharge, the soldier ceases to be subject to orders, but continues in the bonds of honor and patriotism. Now options for a more fulsome religious life are opened.

The “old soldier’s” memory is the action point for the healing of old pains, and for renewal of life as a “soldier of God”. Yet suppressed angers from the older days, and new stresses about a new life-style continue to assault him. Unresolved, these tend to obstruct progress in freedom, drawing him back into the shadows of identity-confusion and purposelessness. These can blind the “old soldier” from the vision of a new life of freedom lived out in the will of God.

To aid in making real this new life there is a new soldiery, the Soldiery of Christ. Here in the comradeship of the faithful – i.e. Holy Church – he accepts anew the call of God to embrace His Holy Bride and learn of Her. He does this through the new and renewed life of worship, prayer, study, fellowship and service. Our Father of power and grace can and does come to “old soldiers” and leads them along these ever new pathways of peace and joy into eternal Communion with Him through His Son by His Spirit

Finding hope in God's will during difficult times

By *Alexis Thiessen*



“A biblical hope is not an escape from reality or from problems. It doesn't leave us idle, drifting or just rocking on the front porch. If our hope is biblical and based on God's promises, it will put us in gear.” J. Hampton Keathley III

Since suffering and struggling can be unavoidable in this world, using that difficult experience for good, like helping others with the same issues is sometimes the best way to find hope, and when everyday is a challenge. You have to find something good in every day.

I struggle with Fibromyalgia, depression, and anxiety. As a result of the chronic pain and fatigue I had to quit my job. My husband is disabled as well so this put a huge strain on our financial situation since I was the bread winner. We have been waiting on a disability claim for almost 3 years now and our only source of income is the charity of our family and friends.

Although a lot of people might say I don't try hard enough or that I'm lazy, I can't control when my body is going to give out. I am actually an over achiever and I push myself too hard. When my body doesn't cooperate I beat myself up and feel worthless. This is not the will of God, and although it is difficult I turn this despair into hope by remembering that God does have a use for me and loves me in whatever condition I am in.

I have lost a lot, but in return I have gained so much more. I have hope for the future. I have a close relationship with God that I only thought I had before. It's hard to explain a struggle to someone who has never really struggled, or can't relate to your situation, all you can do is pray. Every month is a struggle financially and physically, and I never really know how we are going to make it but I have faith and hope that we will make it, because I know that God has us covered. I will follow and have hope in God's will because it is the only way to live, and the only way I would want to live. I first saw this strife as a punishment. Had I done something wrong? Was I put here to suffer?

Over the last three years I found that through the suffering, I got closer to God and my anger and self loathing dissolved. I can now say that I have never felt so much peace and I owe it all to God and his infinite love. I know that with him I can get through even the roughest patches.

Daily Prayer for the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross.

C. Let us pray
C. Our help is in the name of the Lord,
R. *Who made heaven and earth.*
C. Holy Lord, Holy Mighty One,
R. *Incline your ear towards us.*
C. St. Benedict, Father of our Order
R. *Pray for us.*
C. Mother Mary, Queen of Heaven
R. *Pray for us.*
C. All the Angels and Saints
R. *Pray for us.*

Please pray this prayer every day.

All. O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we give you praise and thanks.

May we respond to Your call in charity and courage and grow in numbers and holiness.

Bless our Abbot General Oscar Joseph with good health, growth in wisdom and grace. Help him to see the world as you do.

May our Beloved Order be blessed with leaders, both monks and clerics, who will carry forward our charism.

May our Beloved Order be blessed with the material and financial resources necessary to fulfill its mission.

We ask you, Lord, to bless us with a residential monastery in Winston-Salem where we can live as brothers and host others in a spirit of hospitality as taught by our Father, Benedict.

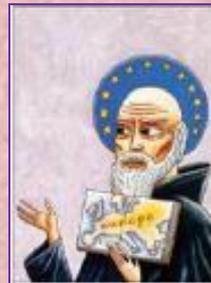
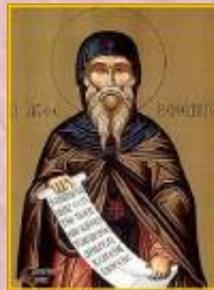
Holy Father Benedict help us to bring a contemplative balance to everyday matters, to cultivate the daily disciplines of work and prayer, to persevere in our vows of obedience, stability and daily conversion.

We pray for all those who have requested our prayers particularly members of our Order and those who are in union with us.

We pray also for those who may have given up hope or have forgotten to pray for themselves.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever.

Amen.



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www.vimeo.com/Cistercian

For entire
collection go to



The Abbot is really funny in
some of these videos.
Can you believe it?

Dom Oscar Joseph, OCCO, from Br. Columcille, OCCO

I have really enjoyed ALL of these videos and I think that this technology is blessed by your and by our intent. I think it's really difficult for many of us to "feel" like we are a community, what with distances, languages, etc. Your videos have helped me in that regard. I think of them as chapter talks and pray for my brothers and superiors in relation to what you have said. I am honored to be part of such important work.

Technology gives our worldwide community one more way of coming closer together. I have produced a number of videos to provide personal messages and teaching opportunities for our members. I hope that they will be both enjoyable and inspiring.

They should play on most computer players. If you do not have a player on your computer please Google "free players" and install one of the many that are available. It is easy to do and will only take a moment. It will be well worth the effort. I enjoy Windows Media Player. Here is the address for a free download.

http://www.soft82.com/download/Windows/Windows_Media_Player

The Abbot has gone Skype and so can you!!!

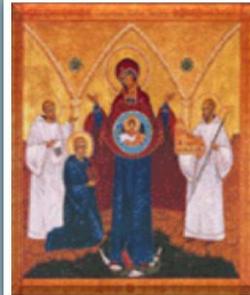
Thanks to Skype we can talk and see each other for FREE no matter where you live. Go to www.skype.com, more info.

My address is abbotoscarjoseph

**Video
information is
in the Inquirer
section of our
website.**



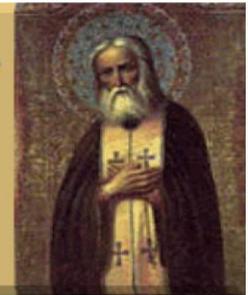
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Request for submissions Please send articles, news submissions, book reviews, photos, etc. to **Abbot Oscar Joseph, OCCO, Abbot@bellsouth.net**. Please send using Word document and jpeg photos.

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